

Pennsylvania SLDS Milestones

Integrate data elements from PDE reports

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), at its own expense, enlisted the services of a consultant to map all the existing collections that are being submitted to PDE from the local education agencies (LEAs). The consultant mapped the elements on all of these reports to unique data elements following the NCES handbook for definitions. The consultant listed the exceptions for fields that did not match the standard definitions. Mapping was also performed against the SIF 1.1 and 2.0 standards. This milestone is still in process pending review and acceptance of the data mapping by the PDE Data Council.

Identify elements for PIMS reporting

PDE has limited the scope of the initial rollout of the PIMS Data Warehouse solution to encompass four applications. Currently, PDE is mapping the data elements being collected by these applications and, with the help of the data mapping referenced above, is consolidating like elements in order to streamline the collection. PDE is attempting to finish this analysis and release this information prior to the awarding of the PIMS RFP to a contractor in order to give the LEAs and their respective Student Information Systems (SIS) vendors the maximum amount of lead-time to make the required system modifications to enable this collection currently slated for the fall of 2007. As with any data collection, the final analysis and documentation must be reviewed and approved by the PDE Data Council.

Insure that metadata facility is synchronized with NCES Handbooks

PDE contracted with the University of Pittsburgh to establish a metadata facility for all the data elements leveraged by the Department in data collections and reporting. One of the main requirements that was specified in the contract was the necessity for the facility to be synchronized with the NCES Handbook standards.

Develop metadata facility web tool and make available to LEAs

The current PDE metadata facility is in beta release and is available to specific technology users within PDE. PDE has not released this beta to the public for various reasons (please see the milestone 'Identify elements for PIMS reporting' above). PDE, in the PIMS RFP, has requested that the PIMS vendor, once the contract is awarded, evaluate the current metadata facility and advise PDE either to move forward with the existing design, or pursue an alternate solution that is shown to be superior to the existing application. This milestone is currently at a standstill until the awarding of the RFP and the vendor performing the specified analysis on the facility. If PDE decides to pursue a different solution, we will ensure that the new metadata facility is fully synchronized with the NCES Handbook standards.

Reconvene the PDE Data Council with representatives from each program office in the Department to act as Data Stewards.

PDE, specifically the Bureau of Educational Technology, has been working on reconvening the PDE Data Council in order to facilitate the oversight of the integration of the various disparate data collections into the PIMS application. Work to date includes the drafting of a new Data Council charter stating the scope of the responsibilities that the Data Council will have in the new PIMS business environment, the review of the current membership of the council with recommendations on additional members that would be beneficial to the group, and the establishment of the Security and Child Accounting subcommittees in order to advance these critical initiatives prior to the PIMS vendor

coming on board. The Security subcommittee was directed to lead the drafting of a formal data access and use policy for PDE. The Child Accounting subcommittee was directed to establish what the current business rules are for the attribution of a child, Average Daily Attendance, and Average Daily Membership. These business rules will lead to the groundwork on how the claiming process will work in the PIMS application going forward. In addition, this subcommittee was tasked to define how the process would need to be modified and what data elements will now be necessary to be submitted by the LEAs since the application will be moving from an aggregate reporting structure to an individual student collection.

PDE Data Council establishes guidelines and procedures for access to the data contained in PIMS

The Security subcommittee of the PDE Data Council has drafted a Data Access and Use Policy. This policy is a best of breed document that was created by analyzing existing Data Access and Use Policies from other states and taking the sections relevant to Pennsylvania and incorporating them into the policy, while adding PDE specific language and criteria. This policy has been sent to PDE's legal office for review.

PAsecureID Project

The PAsecureID project is by far PDE's biggest achievement towards the realization of our goal of a statewide longitudinal data system. PDE kicked off this project in December of 2005 with a very aggressive timeline of assigning a statewide identifier, known as PAsecureID, to each of Pennsylvania's 1.8 million public school students by June of 2006. By working closely with our LEAs, the LEA's SIS vendors, our assessment vendors, and our contractors, PDE was able to reach this goal on time and within the budget allocated. Since the project was such a success, program areas within PDE, such as early childhood, post-secondary, safe schools, and special education, have realized the power a unique persistent identifier has in regards to the ability to track a student's progress and have expressed interest in getting the PAsecureIDs into their applications. PDE expended our own funds for this initiative.

Integration of the PAsecureID into third party applications

As a result of the successful PAsecureID project, PDE program areas have reached out to our Special Education and Assessment vendors and worked with them to get the PAsecureID integrated into their systems in order to drive the usage of the PAsecureID earlier than might have been anticipated if PDE would have waited for the PIMS application to begin using the statewide identifier.

PIMS RFP:

Procure PIMS Systems Integrator

Systems Integrator Ramp Up

PDE is currently in the process of awarding the PIMS RFP to a vendor. This process has unfortunately taken much longer than anticipated due to a number of factors. After receiving the initial responses, it became clear that the vendors did not all have the same understanding of what PDE requested in the RFP. At that point, PDE decided to clarify certain points in the RFP and requested that the vendors take the clarifications into account and submit a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) for cost. The results of the BAFO have allowed PDE to better align and compare the responses. PDE is currently analyzing the BAFO submissions and preparing a strategy for negotiations. Due to this extended selection and negotiation process PDE will reschedule the awarding of the contract and therefore the PIMS timeline. PDE is hopeful that we will be able to award this contract no later than the beginning of March 2007. Once the contractor is on board here at PDE we will be working with them to finalize the PIMS project

plan. This finalized project plan will then become the new SLDS timeline for the grant, as previously discussed with our SLDS grant representatives during our monthly status calls.

Expand PIMS Advisory Group to include more LEA representation, particularly principals and teachers

PDE is planning on holding an advisory group meeting within a few weeks of the awarding of the PIMS RFP to a contractor. PDE is planning on expanding the invitee list to include a more diverse section of educational leaders, including principals, LEA technology, data and program administrators, and a particular focus on classroom teachers. This milestone is in process and will continue to be a major focus of the PIMS initiative even beyond the scope of this grant.